BUSINESS PLAN 2000-2001

Department of Labour

1.0 Purpose

The Department of Labour develops a Business Plan each year in order to integrate the department's priorities with its budget, human resources, communications, outcomes and information technology initiatives. The Year 2000-2001 presents a number of fiscal challenges to the Department as it attempts to meet its Mission: Protecting and promoting employment rights and the safety of people and property.

The Department of Labour (DOL) marked the year 1999-2000 as one of its busiest years, that included:

- completing over 270 collective bargaining conciliations and grievance mediations, including many public sector groups, nursing homes, fire, police and essential service providers;
- establishing a new Minimum Wage Rate for businesses and employees that will set the increases for the next three years, and provided overtime equity for the Province's paramedics;
- introducing new regulations under the Electrical Code and for Fuel Safety that modernize and streamline regulatory matters, and pave the way for communications and natural gas installations in NS markets;
- expanding the Occupational Health and Safety inspection and enforcement capacity to reflect the growing NS workforce;
- starting to implement the new Government's agenda and incorporate it into the Department's Business Plan.

2.0 Format

2.1 Planning Context

With 188 staff operating in 10 offices throughout Nova Scotia, the Department of Labour provides service and assistance to the over 415,000 people now employed in the province. The need for knowledgeable, specialized expertise in the rights and responsibilities of the workplace has never been stronger. The Department's website has over 100,000 successful hits per month, and the number of phone contacts continues to increase.

The Department's planning context has been shaped largely by the 17 Acts and 55 supporting sets of regulations that divisions administer. In addition, the workload of the Conciliation Division is

impacted by amalgamations, the end of long term wage freezes in the public sector, and the expanded number of workplaces especially in the construction industry which bring about more complicated and protracted negotiations.

Several major initiatives that have provided insights to the department's planning process over the past three years include the Plummer Report and Coopers and Lybrand Audit, the Auditor General's review of the Workers Compensation System, and the implementation of the Select Committee's Report.

Several consultative initiatives shape the planning context including stakeholders' inputs through such channels as the OHS Advisory Council and the responses to Discussion Papers released by the Fire Marshal's Office. The Departmental Commitment to Quality program ensures feedback by staff to the systems and processes instituted in the Department to maintain a high level of quality in the services we provide to our clients.

2.2 Mission

The Mission of the Department is to protect and promote employment rights and the safety of people and property.

The health of Nova Scotians goes beyond a narrow view of health and includes their health and safety at work. The Department believes that a healthy economy is the key result when both employers and employees work together to prevent workplace injuries and maximize employment rights. Fairness in the workplace and a reasonable approach to issues will be the key to implementing the Government's agenda of a smaller civil service focused on the primary role of Government.

2.3 Goals

- Promote safe and healthy workplaces and work practices.
- Promote fair wage compensation, employment standards, and effective labour/management relations.
- Promote safe buildings and equipment for public protection.
- Continuously improve the service we deliver and improve public and staff satisfaction with the work of the department.
- Promote fairness for injured workers.

The high level Budget Allocations are as follows:

Operational Area	Allocation ('000)
Occupational Health & Safety	7,252.1
Fire Prevention Services	1,343.0
Public Safety	1,711.0
Workers' Advisers Program	1,737.0
Conciliation Services	704.7
Labour Standards	930.3
Adjudication	639.9
Assistance Programs	1,061.0
Administration	1,178.0
Recoveries	(7,868.0)
Total Program Expenses Labour (Net)	8,689.0
Tangible Capital Assets Adjustment	(16.0)
Total Labour (Net)	**8,673.0**

2.4 Core Business Functions

- Communications: Provide education, communications and consultation on legislative and regulatory initiatives and effective prevention measures.
- Effective Dispute Resolution: Provide mediation and conciliation services that promote effective workplace relationships, utilizing alternative dispute resolution techniques.
- Setting Standards: Working with other jurisdictions and stakeholders to develop effective codes and standards that maximize safety and improve business compliance.

- Advice: Providing advice and assistance to individuals and organizations to assist injured workers in relation to the department's legislative mandate and services.

- Legislative Enforcement: Inspect and investigate workplaces, building and equipment to ensure compliance and enforcement with health, safety and employment laws.

2.5 Priorities 2000-01

Goal #1
Promote safe and healthy workplaces and work practices.

- Revise Occupational Health and Safety regulations so that they have specific review or expiry dates to ensure they are current and continue to meet the needs of today's workplace.

- Improve the flow of information to employers, particularly small business, and reinforce the link between risk management and insurance costs (WCB).

Goal #2
Promote fair wage compensation, employment standards, and effective labour/management relations.

- Meet the anticipated increased demand for conciliation and grievance mediation as the public sector is restructured , new construction employees and contracts renegotiated.

Goal #3
Promote safe buildings and equipment for public protection.

- Prepare new Fire Prevention legislation that clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the Provincial and Municipal levels of Government.

- Restructure the Public Safety Division to streamline service and reduce red tape.

Goal #4
Continuously improve the service we deliver and improve public and staff satisfaction with the work of the department.

- Streamline the administrative processes surrounding agencies, boards and commissions and lengthen licensing renewal periods.

Goal #5

Promote fairness for injured workers.

- Implement the recommendations of the Select Committee and the Auditor General and work in closer cooperation with WCB, WCAT and WAP to enhance service provision to injured workers and employers.

2.6 Linkages/Partnerships

1. OHS and WCB Memorandum of Understanding	Provides for sharing services and expertise in such areas as statistics, communications, education and information technology to maximize services to our combined clients.
2. CCOHS	OHS funds the inquiry desk on a per capita basis with the other Canadian jurisdictions to ensure that all employers and employees can access a no cost information service to answer OHS inquiries.
3. Safe-T-Rider Program	Promotes escalator safety to school children and day cares.
4. OHS School Curriculum Development	OHS has provided funding to the Department of Education to develop a core curriculum program for students prior to entering the job market.

2.7 Outcomes and Outcome Measures

Goals/Outcomes	Measures
1. To revise OHS Regulations to include specific repeal dates.	Rate of revisions each year
2. To promote a safety environment that reduces injuries and illness.	Rate of lost time injuries resulting from workplace accidents.
3. To promote a harmonious and stable labour relations environment.	Settlement rate of disputes without strike or lockout.

4. Improving the turnaround time for better client service.	Improving the turnaround time for completed labour standards claims

2.8 Communications

Key Messages for 2000-2001

- **The department is committed to having regulations that make sense, and to reducing red tape.**

  For example:

  Occupational Health and Safety regulations have to be continually updated to reflect a changing marketplace. Very little is "static" on the job today, and for that reason it makes sense to look at what works, what doesn't, and how we can improve it. The department is committed to keeping regulations simple and understandable, so that everyone on the job knows what is expected. The clearer the message, the easier it is to comply.

  We are preparing to introduce a new Fire Prevention Act and have increased fire safety training to help protect people and property from devastating fire losses. We also want to clarify who does what, so that there is no duplication of effort and minimal overlap with other jurisdictions.

  New rules for safe operation of cranes, elevators, boilers and pressure vessels will help protect Nova Scotians, and will streamline compliance requirements for businesses that operate in these areas.

- **Red Tape reduction does not mean deregulation**. The Department is committed to meaningful improvements and enforcement of regulations. The concern is with reducing the paper burden and forms that employers and employees have to fill out, not with substantive changes that may reduce safety.

- **The health of Nova Scotians goes beyond a narrow view of health and includes their health and safety at work.** The Department believes that a healthy economy is the key result when both employers and employees work together to prevent workplace injuries and maximize employment rights. Fairness in the workplace and a reasonable approach to issues will be the key to implementing the Government's agenda of a smaller civil service focused on the primary role of Government.

- **Nova Scotia employers and employees deserve fair treatment, fair pay and respect**. They deserve timely service and information on departmental programs and services that is accurate and timely.

  For example:

  Faster, better investigation and advice to workers on employment issues is a priority.

  Injured workers receive advice and timely support with their Workers' Compensation Board appeals through the Workers' Advisers Program.

- **The Department of Labour plays a major role in Nova Scotia's big picture**: improving quality of life; creating a climate for investment and job creation; and giving the people of this province security, prosperity and hope for the future.

  For example:

  We foster respectful relationships between Nova Scotia workers and their employers. A healthy labour-management climate is good for business, workers and our economy. It helps attract investment and jobs.

  We are harmonizing our legislative requirements to national and international standards -- ensuring maximum safety and effective compliance for business, while preparing them to compete in the global marketplace.

- **Overall, we are committed to improving service to Nova Scotians, listening to concerns, and working together.**

  For example:

  We have developed partnerships with organizations such the Workers' Compensation Board, the Retail Gasoline Dealers Association and the Nova Scotia Construction Safety Association to improve occupational health and safety performance in specific sectors. Through these partnerships, we can promote the department's mission in an economic and effective way.

Key Audiences

1. Nova Scotia employers
2. Nova Scotia workers
3. Labour organizations and other employee associations

4. Business and other employer/management associations
5. Professional/industry associations (ie. Barristers' Society, NSCSA)
6. Other interest groups (ie. Nova Scotia Safety Council, fire service)
7. Departmental employees
8. Government employees
9. Department advisory councils (OHS and Fire Prevention)
10. MLAs
11. Media

2.9 Highlights from Human Resources

In the Department of Labour, there are 188 staff members. Most have highly specialized skill sets and hold a valuable portion of the "corporate memory" for programs provided by the Department. Over two thirds of the Department is over 40 years of age, and males dominate the technical and management fields. Our workforce will change over the next 4 years, as approximately 20 staff members retire in that period, many in the management and technical areas. Filling job vacancies in the technical areas can take time, and can have a large impact on program delivery during the period. Anticipated retirements in Occupational Health and Safety and Public Safety make up the largest number of technical vacancies.

The Integrated Management Development Program (IMD) is designed to provide managers with the training and experience needed to assume leadership roles within the Civil Service. Developing a succession plan for upcoming key vacancies is an integral part of that process. As many as six management retirements are anticipated over the next four years.

Initiatives 2000-2001

The Human Resources Division is responsible for providing services in a number of areas including recruitment and selection, compensation, benefits, labour relations, occupational health and safety, performance management, attendance management and training and development. During 2000-2001 the following key initiatives will be undertaken.

- Improve the service in human resource program delivery.
- Provide consultative support to managers in performance management for implementation of the Integrated Management Development Program (IMD).
- Promote and support participation in training in labour relations for managers.
- Establish goals/plans for management of short term illness and LTD in support of the implementation of corporate disability management policy.

2.10 Highlights from Information Technology

The IT Division provides the department with planning, delivery, implementation, and support services in the areas of computer hardware, software, applications, and networks. During 2000-2001 the following key initiatives will be undertaken to support the Department of Labour;

- work closely with the department to deliver an IT Strategy to address the IT components required to support their business objectives;
- continue to support and safeguard the department's existing production information systems and technologies;
- ongoing support, enhancements and maintenance of the technical infrastructure and information systems in order to maximize the department's investment in technology;
- develop and implement Release 1 of the new Inspection Tracking System;
- continue to improve and evolve the support and development services of the IT division through:
  - complete the implementation of the new LAN security policy for all users within the department;
  - continued roll out of the new approach for the delivery of business solutions;
  - development of the technology infrastructure component of the department's Disaster Recovery Plan.

2.11 Highlights: Financial Services

The role of the Financial Services division of the Corporate Services Unit is to provide day-to-day managing of accounting transactions and to provide financial planning advice and analysis to support business decisions within our client departments. During 2000-2001 the following key initiatives will be undertaken to support the Department of Labour:

- Meet the department's needs with respect to financial analysis in business case development, user fee recoveries, cost/benefit analysis, business planning, estimate and forecast planning and other projects.

- Continue to streamline/ensure efficiency of financial procedures and processes within the Department of Labour in compliance with PSAB government accounting guidelines.
- Support government's agenda with respect to implementation of major revisions to financial management accounting policies.

- Review the current business processes/work flow of the accounts receivables administered by the Department of Labour, to maximize efficiency in the management of the Department's receivables.

- Investigate options available, in partnership with the Department of Business & Consumer Services, to utilize their account collection expertise with Department of Labour's receivable account.